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REMARKS

Claims 1-17 are pending. By this amendment, claims 1 and 7 are amended. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and timely withdrawal of the pending objections and rejections for the reasons discussed below.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejection

Claims 1 and 3-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Admitted Prior Art (AAPA) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,434,315 issued to Grois, *et al.* ("Gris"). A 35 U.S.C. § 103 rejection requires the Examiner to first establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, by establishing three criteria:

First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the prior art, and not based on applicant's disclosure. *In re Vaack*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991).

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the following reasons.

Claims 1 and 7

Claim 1 recites, in pertinent part:

a stationary, non-movable transparent portion through which the marking of interest on the cable is visible when the strain relief clamp is installed on the connector.

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Similarly, claim 7, recites, in pertinent part:

wherein the strain relief clamp includes a stationary, non-movable transparent portion that makes visible the marking of interest when the connector is mounted on the cable and the strain relief clamp is installed on the connector

Grois discloses a fiber optic connector having two pieces: a base portion and a flat, slidable cover. Included in the cover is a transparent window, which allows visible inspection of unmarked, spread-apart optical fibers, which branch out from an end of a fiber optic cable. Complementary interengaging strain relief members provided on the base portion and the cover for automatically embrace the fiber optic cable whenever the cover is slidably mounted onto the base portion. The slidable cover disclosed by Grois is movable from a first open position to a second closed position. When the cover is in the open position and/or separated from the base portion, the fiber optic cable is inserted into the base portion of the connector. Once the cable is inserted, the cover is moved to the closed position to secure the cable within the connector. Such an easily moved window is contrary the claimed invention, which, in claims 1 and 7, recite a stationary, non-separable transparent portion.

Consequently, even if Grois and the AAPA were combined, the combination would not result in the invention as claimed in claims 1 and 7. This is buttressed by the Examiner's statement that the AAPA does not disclose a strain relief clamp with a transparent portion through which a marking of interest on a cable is visible when the strain relief claim is installed on a connector.

Thus, claims 1 and 7 are allowable over Grois. Claim 3 depends from claim 1 and is also allowable for the same reasons as claim 1, as well as for its added features.

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Claim 13

Independent claim 13 recites, in part

a strain relief clamp fixedly mounted on the connector, the strain relief clamp having a window proximate an end of the strain relief clamp aligning with a prescribed identification mark of the identification marks on the cable, the window being circumferentially positioned about the entire strain relief clamp.

As explained above, nothing in Grois or the AAPA discloses or suggests this feature. In Grois, the strain relief clamp includes a window only at a top portion of the flat cover. The cover is slid onto the body. In this configuration, the transparent window cannot be circumferentially positioned about the entire strain relief clamp.

Consequently, claim 13 is allowable over Grois for the same reasons as claim 1, as well as for its added features.

Claims 10-12

Claims 10 -12 each recite, *inter alia*, that the transparent portion is a transparent ring. The Examiner cites column 3, lines 66-67, and column 4, lines 1-2 of Grois for the proposition that Grois discloses a transparent ring. Additionally, the Examiner states that Applicant should note that it is within the general knowledge of one of ordinary skill in the art to provide appropriate shape transparent portions on the strain relief clamp. Applicant traverses these assertions, which do not appear to be accurate.

First, the cited portions of Grois state:

The entire cover may be molded of substantially transparent plastic material which is texturized in areas 82 so that substantially the entire cover is opaque except for transparent window 80.

Clearly, nothing in this description discloses that the transparent window of Grois can be formed as a circumferential ring. Instead, as Figure 1, of Grois shows a planar cover, and the connector itself being rectangular. Only the cover includes the transparent window. In fact, the Grois references teaches away from this feature in that it discloses that substantially the entire cover is opaque except for transparent window.

Additionally, the connector disclosed by Grois would not operate if the transparent window formed in the cover were modified to form a circumferential ring surrounding the cover and the base portion. For example, the cover would not slide back and forth between the open and closed position if a circumferential ring were formed around its side edges, or about the top edges of the base portion. Because the transparent window taught by Grois is not easily modifiable to produce the features recited in claims 10-12, Applicant traverses the Examiner's assertion that it is general knowledge of one of ordinary skill in the art to provide appropriate shape transparent portions on the strain relief clamp. Applicant also respectfully requests the Examiner to either provide documentary evidence to support the assertion or withdraw the rejection.

Thus, claims 10-12 are allowable because Grois fails to disclose the features recited therein.

Claim 2

Applicant notes that claim 2 depends from allowable claim 1, and as such, includes all the elements thereof. Because claim 1 recites at least one novel element (e.g., a stationary, non-

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movable transparent portion) not disclosed in the AAPA or the cited references, whether alone or in combination, claim 2 is also allowable. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection and pass claim 2 to issue.

For the above reasons, the Examiner has failed to establish a prima facie case of obviousness over claims 1-17. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection over claims 1-17 be withdrawn.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that all of the claims are patentably distinct from the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below, if needed. Applicants hereby make a written conditional petition for extension of time, if required. Please charge any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to **IBM Deposit Account No. 09-0457** (Endicott).

Respectfully submitted,



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